

AN
A P O L O G Y
FOR THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
DAVID HUME, Esq.
WITH A PARALLEL BETWEEN HIM AND
THE LATE
LORD CHESTERFIELD :

TO WHICH IS ADDED
AN ADDRESS
TO THE REV. DR. HORNE,
By WAY OF REPLY
TO HIS LETTER
TO ADAM SMITH, L.L.D.

"For modes of Faith, let graceless zealots fight,
His can't be wrong, whose Life is in the right."

POPE.

BY COURTNEY MELMOTH.
THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

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WILLIAM STRANAHAN

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[1]

TO

WILLIAM STRAHAN, Esq.

SIR,

THE late Mr. David Hume
hath left to your care, the
publication of his posthumous
papers. As there is every rea-
son to believe they turn upon
similar researches with such as
b have

have been already printed; or, as it is more likely, they may carry his philosophy still nearer to that point, which he might not think it discreet to push too vigorously in his life-time, the critical and Christian clamour, no doubt, will be raised afresh against him. It is well known, Sir, that you were considered by Mr. Hume, in a much higher light than that of a mere publisher. There was, apparently, a mixture of trust and tenderness, as well as a good opinion of you, *officially*, blended with the idea of his connection.

nection. His memory, therefore, and the honours or disgraces which shall hereafter attend it, must, in a particular manner, interest and affect you. As he was your "most excellent friend," his friendship, and the virtues which produced it, are, I trust, "never to be forgotten."

Dr. Adam Smith hath signed his name to a letter, at the close of which, he thus concisely sums up the character of Mr. Hume.

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"I have

"I have always considered him, both in his life-time and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit."

It has been long imagined, that, persons who were tinctured in any degree with that philosophy, which Mr. Hume was supposed to favour, could not possibly have any title to such a character, as is here drawn by Dr. Smith. That gentle-

gentleman, however, hath, with a commendable fortitude, asserted, the virtues of his deceased friend.—The object of the following pages, is a confirmation of that assertion, as well as a philosophical plea for the justice on which it is founded.

Three other views, however, are connected with the design of this Apology. Some personal knowledge of Mr. Hume; some expectation of the popular censure, which, will soon be revived against him, if not a-

gainst his affectionate Dr. Smith, and a wish I have long entertained to have a fit opportunity of introducing such strictures on the most atrocious species of dissimulation as will be found, in the course of the work, are all arguments which have had a share in making it public.

My thoughts have, indeed, been thrown upon paper in haste; yet they are, by no means, hasty thoughts; but, have resulted from contemplating the death of Mr. Hume,

some

some months before it actually happened.—In short, Sir, it is conceived, these remarks, upon the Life, Death, Consistency, and Philosophy, of David Hume, may, very properly, precede any new edition of his works,—may, likewise, do some service to the writer, and some to the man; place truth and the affectation of it, like the sun and its shadow, in the water, side by side, in order to shew the splendour of one, and the mockery of the other.

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As to yourself, Sir, it would
be an insult upon your feelings,
not to suppose every thing of
this nature is acceptable.

I am,

Your most obedient Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

PRE-

PRELIMINARY

ADDRESS.

READER, be not startled,
at the title of this performance.
It means no ill either to you or
your religion, of whatever cast
that religion may be. The
Apology here offered to your in-
spection, that truth, or Chris-
tianity

tianity itself would not, of their
 own accord, admit. I beseech
 you to peruse these detached
 thoughts from the beginning to
 the end; and indulge the im-
 pulses of the pauser, reason, be-
 fore you determine upon any
 of the subjects here treated,
 with that liberality which be-
 comes the independent spirit of
 scientific enquiry, in a free state.
 An Apology, for the philosophy
 of the metaphysical Mr. Hume,
 appears to denote in this sus-
 picious age, to be either ab-
 struse, or difficult, or else dan-
 gerous,

gerous, and deistical. From this work, fear neither of these. It is written without profaneness, or irreverence. It promotes all morality flowing from all faiths, and it corrects all hypocrisy, wherever it is detected. The prostitution of Christianity, or, in other words, the Christian religion made use of as a cloak to cover the most irreligious purposes, is more fatal to the Supreme Governor of the world, and to his subordinate creatures, than a much greater latitude of principle than was indulged by
Mr.

Mr. Hume. Avowed Atheism itself, is not half so bad, as concealed deception, especially when it takes refuge under the plausible and unsuspected robe of Christian professors. An extraordinary something, betwixt superstition, and Popery pleads in favour of this worst species of enormity; for which reason, it is less chastised than any other. Common minds, which are terribly trammelled by any shallow signals of authority, are afraid of yielding to the suggestions of their own understanding, and
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so the evil is permitted, through mere vulgar cowardice, to arise, till the effects of the mischief become almost irreparable. Hence it is, also, that the truth of a whole library, were it closely analyzed, and then consolidated to the exclusion of every thing adventitious, and imaginary,—the whole amount of matter of fact, with respect to things important, would be reduced to a few scanty volumes; or, at most, supply the shelves of a small book-case.

Having

Having a due veneration for the rights of the press, I have here, I hope, not unadvisedly, ventured to investigate subjects, or rather, to start hints, which a pusillanimity, very prejudicial to candid enquiry, hath commonly passed over. I have started matters, which it is to be wished, were more philosophically pursued by some able hand, and I am not without hope that what is here rudely sketched, will be formed into a correcter system by a masterly writer.

In

In the mean time, what is offered in the subsequent pages, however it may offend the zealous, will not be ill received by those who are liberal and consistent.

which a pusillanimity, judicial to candid enquiry, hath commonly passed over. I have started matters, which it is to be wished, were more philosophically pursued by some able hand, and I am not without hope that what is here rudely sketched, will be formed into a correcter system by a masterly writer.

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In the same time what is
called in the independent
lawyer is now offered the
lawyer will be its recovery by
those who are liberal and can

A N
A P O L O G Y, &c.

S E C T I O N I.

OF HUME'S PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIST-
ENCY.

DAVID HUME is dead! Never were the pillars of Orthodoxy so desperately shaken, as they are now, by that event. It was attended by every thing that contradicts the general prophecy concerning it. He hath proved himself, in opposi-
B tion

tion to a contrary opinion, one of those rare characters, which so seldom adorn either this, or any other country; to wit, an *uniform Philosopher*. He is one of the few, who died in the practice of precepts, which he laid down in the earliest periods of a speculative life. The last scene is lately painted by himself, and every touch of it corresponds, corroborates, and confirms those which preceded it. He took up the pen, to prove his consistency, at a crisis, commonly esteemed by men, the most alarming and pathetic. Air, phyfic, exercise, and the alleviating sollicitudes of friendship, were all tried, and were all ineffectual: even adulation,

on, which is so seldom unwelcome, either to the sick, or healthy, was not able to seduce our philosopher into the hope of an existence protracted beyond the limits of a few months.—“I happened to come into his room,” said one of his most respectable friends, “when he was reading a letter, sent him by Colonel Edmondstone, who had written an eternal adieu to him, and which, Mr. Hume immediately shewed to me: I told him, that, though I was sensible how very much he was weakened, and that appearances, in many respects, were very bad, yet his chearfulness was still so great, the spirit of life seemed still to be so very strong in him, that, I could

not help entertaining some faint hopes. He answered, "Your hopes are groundless. An habitual diarrhoea of more than a year's standing, would be a very bad disease at any age; at *my* age, it is a mortal one. When I lie down in the evening, I feel myself weaker, than when I rose in the morning; and when I rise in the morning, weaker than when I lay down in the evening. I am sensible, besides, that some of my vital parts are affected, so that I *must* soon die."

I have admitted this extract, because it marks, in the most vivid colours, the invariable, practical, consistency of Hume to his own theory.

theory. Those, to whom that theory is obnoxious, wished, and expected a very different deportment of its author in his last moments; the more especially, if those moments were past (which was the case) under the declinings of a disorder that should waste the body, without impairing the mind. The persons, who maintained opposite, and what is esteemed, correcter tenets, imagined, that all the subtlety of a scepticism, avowed in the vigour of gay and glowing youth; and of arguments to support them, written when the pulse was full, among the ardours of science, and for the sake of singularity,

would, upon the bed of a lingering distemper, all fly off, as the prospect of dissolution became apparent, and leave their author in the agonies of terror-struck repentance, or in the horrors of overwhelming despair. I, myself, know one person, in particular, and he still living, and not unknown in the Christian world, who prognosticated the most tragical exit to David Hume.—“Take my word for it, sir,” said he, one day to me, “the triumph of that man, (meaning Hume) is short-lived. He breaks apace: from an almost athletic corpulency, he is, within a few months, shrunk into the very shadow of himself. I

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hear he still affects his accustomed gaiety, and persists in his unchristian principles: but this conduct will wear away in proportion as he gets worse and worse. As Dean Swift stands upon record the victim of disappointment, pique, pride, ill-nature, so, I foresee, will David Hume be a mournful example of that vain, and vicious philosophy, which he hath long had the audacity to espouse. Methinks, I already see him, sir, in the extremity; tortured at once, by the lashes of his conscience, and labouring to continue life, that he may publicly give the lie to his former horrible documents. Poor wretch—I pity him, I could almost wish his prayer granted,

that he might do some justice to posterity ; and, in that justice, propitiate the wrath, the omnipotent wrath, which must necessarily be kindled against him. Instead of which,—shocking reverse,—observe him struggling at the same time with death, and with a thorough consciousness of having misguided mankind ; of having endeavoured to undermine the foundation of religion—and of meriting detestation.”

In all the phrenzy of a fiery zeal, bordering, I fear, somewhat upon bigotry, did a celebrated *Christian* author, as near as I can recollect, in these words, foretell the miseries of David Hume ; and in the same furor

ror of language, hath he, doubtless, been treated, by many others. On the perusal of that pamphlet, which states the accounts of his last illness, and all the concomitant circumstances that attended it, I should like much, as a matter of curiosity only, to know the unaffected state of *their* feelings : their prophecy is, at all events, unfulfilled : and, what is worse, all the *minute* articles (which are generally the most marking) rather add to, than deduct from, the great aggregate of their consternation.

In justice to the memory of an extraordinary man, who hath, it is presumed, many secret and many public

public enemies, at least in a literary and scientific sense, it is worth while to take a view of some of those points, which prove him, beyond the possibility of a dispute, to be at least a *sincere believer in his own sentiments*. Many, indeed, will think, that this, however perspicuously proved, will be doing him no real honour; since, in proportion to the clearness of the evidence upon this matter, it will only shew his impiety and obstinate infidelity the plainer; thereby, in the end, incurring upon him a more general disgrace. I am of a different opinion. The terms Infidelity, Impiety, and Atheism, should not be lavishly trusted from the lip. We should not presume

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[II]

“To deal damnation through the land
On each, we deem our foe:”

But, it is less the design of these papers to *defend* Hume's principles, than to shew, upon the best authority, that he was earnest in what he wrote, and that, through every part of his life, even to the very moment of his death, he made precept and practice go, amicably, hand in hand together. First, however, be it observed, that, whatever might be the force of his *faith*; no one, it is conjectured, will charge him with having neglected *good works*. I do not pretend to say how far those *are*, or are

not

not sufficient. Such enquiries are digressive from my subject. At the same time, I could wish (and sure it is but a reasonable request) that, for these, he may have a proper *degree of credit*.

Perhaps, it is one of the very worst circumstances against the cause of Christianity, that, very few of its professors were ever, either so moral, so humane, or could so philosophically govern their *passions*, as the sceptical David Hume. The simple dictates of this gentleman's own heart, unassisted by those examples, and sacred sentiments, which are supposed to inspire

spire universal "love and good will amongst men," inspired him to practise all the duties, decencies, and charities. Thus Hume the Unbeliever, as he hath been called, led a life that might even, when scrutinized by the eye of malevolence itself, call a blush into the cheeks of those, who would fain be thought, in the imaginations of men, to be *steadfast and immoveable in the faith*. It is not a little shocking to thinking people, to perceive that the spirit of hypocrisy so generally gone forth; and it is still worse, to see *that* hypocrisy (according to the assurance of a late lord) so generally successful and carry all before it.

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It demands, alas! no search into the records of antiquity, to prove that, the *Christian* world prosecutes this duplicity with a vigour, to which the sceptic Hume never had the infamy to stoop. I do not say this is an argument to destroy, or to invalidate the faith of Christians; but I *will* take upon me to say, it is a dreadful symptom of an un-soundness in its professors, and friends, when they so commonly skulk behind the holy shield of their religion, as a *hiding place* from the eyes of the world, whenever they have a mind to do any thing in direct opposition to its most obvious
and

and elementary principles. Either the religion is somewhere defective in itself, (which I, by no means, think so likely as the alternative) or else the votaries themselves have a much worse opinion of its *real* origin than sceptics; because, were not one of these, or perhaps, a mixture of them both, the *fact*, surely they could not, so much oftener than those sceptics, act in general defiance of its maxims. I, however, principally confine myself to that miserable hypocrisy, which hath so very frequently been *discovered* amongst the votaries of this amiable religion; and, in particular, such of them as have gained the greatest

greatest popularity, by an ostentatious display of it. I beg these sentiments may not be thought to have any tendency to hurt the Christian religion, of whose excellence I am not now to treat; yet, till some of its professors can, by the conjunction of *faith and good works*, back'd by the prospect of *futurity*, surpass, or at least equal, the virtues of a man who was tender, friendly, generous, and social; let these vain glorious boasters have the modesty to hold their tongues, and speak nothing; since nothing can be spoken, but to their disgrace.—It is to the honour of David Hume, then, that he was no *hypocrite* in philosophy; and that, unlike the
many

many *detected* hypocrites in *Christianity*, he acted as he wrote, and wrote no more than, at all times, he actually felt.

This may be evidenced more accurately, when we run our eye over that posthumous paper, which he hath, very characteristically, called, *A Funeral Oration*. Prior to this, I would just turn an old subject on a new side: I would make a comment or two, on that shameful species of delusion, which, arrayed in the fair and unsuspecting robes of orthodoxy, makes the most fatal depredations upon society; and, indeed, does infinitely more mischief than the most daring and declared infidelity.

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SECTION II.

OF RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY.

ONE of the distinguishing features, by which we mark the present age, is religious Hypocrisy, or that abominable *prudery* in Sentiment, which, from the lip outwards, deceives the shallow multitude, who mistake it for the conscientious scruples of moral sanctity. A philosopher, who looks into the heart, and can trace many of its manœuvres to their source; whose

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acquaint-

acquaintance with life, and whose skill in detecting the chicane of men, sees, clearly, at a single glance, that the whole apparatus of external appearance, is only a political veil thrown over the real feelings and propensities of nature: this fallacy, to his penetrating eye, is sufficiently obvious; he detects the cheat in a moment, and, did he not know how easily the major part of mankind were disposed to favour *that* which suits equally their own purposes of imposing upon each other (by which means the Hypocrisy becomes general), he would wonder how those, who are supposed to stand at the top of rarefied and rationalized matter, could be so con-

stantly the bubbles of imagination. Bubbles, however, they notoriously are, in defiance of the very feelings which contradict their puritanical pretensions. This duplicity hath *ever* existed in life, and hath now crept into *letters*. There is a set of writers, who affect a chastity of sentiment, and a kind of primitive preciseness in style, with a view of passing upon the superficial part of the public (which is infinitely the larger part) as orthodox moralists, and the most zealous promoters of Christian rectitude. Copious is the catalogue of authors, whose performances are read and relished, upon this very principle.

Hence

Hence it is, that, literary reputation, like almost every other distinction, is, in these times, merely empirical. It is, nevertheless, not unamusing to a philosopher,—when he hath a mind to relieve himself from the labour of severer thinking, with the petty concealments of the busy and more vacant world,—to overturn, with a calmness peculiar to his collected character, the superficial systems of these *ingenious impostors*.

When I have felt myself in a humour, that disposes to such pleasant pastime; when I can descend from worthier sciences, to the little designs which men have upon each

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other, I have totally destroyed the whole web of Hypocrisy, and discovered, in plausible maxims, more tendencies to vice and immorality, or *else more insincerity*, than in any writings of avowed luxury and licentiousness. Our modern moralists, especially of the sacred order, have the art of making Virtue terrible, and Vice an object of indifference: like an unskilful painter, they disfigure the native amiableness of the one by certain rigid strokes of the pencil too formidable to be seen with pleasure; and they pourtray the marking features of the other, either so loosely or ludicrously, that, as we have no violent desire to possess the one, so
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have we no remarkable disgust to the other. Nay, our refined moral mongers advance much farther; Religion herself, a word for ever at the tip of their tongues, and the very God of it, a term even more in common usage, suffers at the very time they pretend the contrary. Like the "hand-writing upon the wall," it is upon record against the consistency of some of our dabblers in morals, that they have described the Deity infinitely more like a devil than a God: they tell us, he is all merciful and all benevolent, and yet very gravely insist, his punishments are extreme, and his anger, on particular occasions, eternal; they describe him as armed with a flaming

sword, to destroy the unhappy compound of those passions, which, they allow, he hath himself implanted; they talk of his having, propensely, hardened the heart of the sinner, as he did that of Pharoah, and yet that he rewards with plague and pestilence the creature whom he hath *destined* to disobedience; they enlarge much upon his tenderness, and yet observe, in one and the same page, that the crimes of the father shall be visited on the children, even unto the fourth generation. I appeal to the man, who hath fortitude enough to think one moment for himself, whether the Omnipotent, thus delineated, is not rather dishonoured than glorified! Are such inconsistent

sistent qualities possible, to an essence all pure, immutable, uncontradictory? The real character of the universal Parent is clouded, confused, and enveloped, in the thick fog of human opinions and human inventions. Rewards and punishments, are, doubtless, held out to men as proper examples to encourage and to deter; but they should never be injudiciously blended, as confounded one with the other.

How much happier would be the consequence; how much more would it do honour to the Christian cause, if divines and moralists were to inculcate, both in their public orations, and writings, that species
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of Morality, Sentiment, Philosophy, or whatever else you please to call it, which draws the portraits of Virtue with all possible amiableness, which is finely coloured, which has recourse both to Eloquence and Poetry, in order to attract, and entertain, rather than to affright and disgust ! Doubtless, more may be done by inviting than by insisting, especially in cases of duty and obedience, which are, in themselves, I conceive, not very consistent with the pride or the dignity of human nature : true it is, that, a severe master may, by the power of that very severity, create in a servant a kind of momentary veneration, but the very instant he is out of the presence

sence of his superior, he admits, of necessity, a mixed sentiment of hatred and terror. This mode of argument may soar from familiar life, to the last splendid degrees of that preternatural grandeur, and power, which divines impute to the Deity. I ask the reader, if, after having heard any discourse in which Providence hath been described in all its terrors, as holding out on the one hand, the horrors of perdition, and displaying, on the other, the signs of unrelenting and implacable resentment against beings, confessedly imperfect; I ask, if he does not come away from such discourse, impressed, rather with a sense of Almighty *revenge* and *barbarity*, than with the com-

comfortable ideas, and all their cheerful associations, of fairer and more alluring attributes *. This makes it

* Mr. Hume hath, himself, noticed this contradiction: "Thus it may safely be affirmed, that popular religions are really, in the conception of their more vulgar votaries, a species of dæmonism; and the higher the Deity is exalted in power and knowledge, the lower, of course, is he depressed in goodness and benevolence; whatever epithets of praise may be bestowed on him by his amazed adorers. Among idolaters, the words may be false, and belie the secret opinion: but among more exalted religionists, the opinion itself often contracts a kind of falsehood, and belies the inward sentiment. The heart secretly detests such measures of cruel and implacable vengeance; but the judgment dares not but pronounce them perfect and adorable. And the

it obvious, that the great arguments
for belief of Christianity, and love
of its origin, are commonly mistaken
even

the additional misery of this inward struggle aggravates all the other terrors, by which these unhappy victims to superstition are for ever haunted.

Lucian observes, that a young man, who reads the history of the gods in Homer or Hesiod, and finds their factions, wars, injustice, incest, adultery, and other immoralities so highly celebrated, is much surprised afterwards, when he comes into the world, to observe, that punishments are by law inflicted on the same actions, which he had been taught to ascribe to superior beings. The contradiction is still perhaps stronger between the representations given us by some latter religions and our natural ideas of generosity, lenity, impartiality,
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even by those, who professionally preach every Sunday upon the subject. The *frowns* of God may terrify into an *extorted* obedience,

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and justice; and in proportion to the multiplied terrors of these religions, the barbarous conceptions of the divinity are multiplied upon us. Nothing can preserve untainted the genuine principles of morals in our judgment of human conduct, but the absolute necessity of these principles to the existence of society. If common conception can indulge princes in a system of ethics, somewhat different from that which should regulate private persons, how much more those superior beings, whose attributes, views, and nature are so totally unknown to us? *Sunt superis sua jura.* The gods have maxims of justice peculiar to themselves."

And

as we may frighten a child, or a domestic, into the very falshood, for which we are at that moment chiding him. But this is, in effect, making God the cause of our hypocrisy. Timorous minds, indeed, and those who do not understand the phenomena of nature, may dread the sound of the thunder, imputing that sound, not to any thing in the order of nature, which is agreeable to the very construction of the universe and

And again, in another place, with still greater conciseness : "How is the Deity disfigured in our representations of him ! What caprice, absurdity, and immorality are attributed to him ! How much is he degraded even below the character, which we should naturally, in common life, ascribe to a man of sense and virtue !" *Nat. Hist. Relig.*

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the regular operations of the material system, but to the immediate displeasure of the Deity. Thus it is, that after any great calamity (whether public or private), such as the effusion of much blood by the success of our national enemies, or the sudden reduction of any family (an unexpected transition from affluence to imprisonment for instance), it is common enough for ignorant people to inflict upon themselves very severe and unnecessary rigours, by way, it is presumed, of propitiating the wrath of Providence, than which, by the bye, there cannot possibly be shewn to that Providence a greater indignity; for doth not this conduct evidently imply, that, God requires
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to be first thanked for having made men miserable, and then bribed by flattery lest that misery should be continued?

I may receive a stroke of ill-fortune with a proper degree of firmness, with all the decencies of resignation; I may bear my burthen, either as a Philosopher, or as a Christian, but I can never be persuaded to believe, that any being can be *barbarously* delighted with the horrible incense of sighs and tears; or that he exacts such a diabolical sacrifice, and expects, at the same time, that we should call it *devotion*. It is downright wickedness! The whole of the matter then, amounts

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to this,—To make men in love with *any superior power*, he who represents to us the extent and the nature of that power, must take great care, lest he destroys the hypothesis he means to support.

To effect this, it is not necessary to make that power a mere *fool of good-nature*, any more than it is to make him a *tyrant of cruelty*.

Would we wish to inspire a stranger with a favourable idea of any of our acquaintance? we *do* begin his character by saying that, if he is once offended *thoroughly*, he will not only pursue the offenders to

to the verge of the grave, but even carry his resentment into the coffin, and maliciously scatter the bones in testimony of the still-surviving vigour of his resentment; neither do we say, that he will wreak his vengeance on the widow, or her now orphan children, because, this would effectually deter from forming any sort of connection with so execrable a wretch. No; we take the fairer side of the argument; we dwell upon such parts of his character, as naturally recommend him to reason and the sensibilities; nay, rather than let him want a cubit to the dignity or amiableness of his *moral stature*, we venture to draw a compliment or two from the me-

taphors of *imagination*, nor do we quit the charming subject till we have prepared the mind to expect the most delightful pleasures in his society.

Such is exactly the case with the more magnificent image of the Deity, whom, we shall always honour, in proportion as his attributes are represented, through the medium of gentleness, forgiveness, and complacency.

There seems, however, no little share of ignorance, in painting, thus publicly, the Deity in a passion; in giving him *obstinacy*, *ill-will*, *ill-nature*, and all the turbulences of
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a rigorous task-master ; especially where the servants themselves are, by the necessity of their natures, pre-sentenced to obey those necessities.

The trite and very vulgar argument of *free-will* with all the futile doctrine of *agencies*, which have, unluckily, employed so many thousands reams of paper, fall to the very earth, and mix with the dust of it, upon the honest scrutiny of those, that are not to be deluded by the jargon of mere *pulpit* debate.

But I should, by entering upon this at present, take a much greater latitude than is now expedient ; my design, being, not so much to di-

gress from my subject, as to incorporate what seems in its nature analogous, to wit, some philosophical strictures on the danger of *popular hypocrisy* in sacred matters, and on a mode of dissimulation in *sensitment*, which dishonours the frank and liberal spirit of true science. But, our *puritans of the press*, take especial care to write very religiously without *any meaning at all*; without, indeed, having any determinate idea of that delicate partition which divides one specific quality from another, without any sober system of either thinking, writing or acting. I have been entertained with the ingenuities of men, (I call them ingenuities, because, sometimes, they really

really are such,) who have volumni-
ously recommended a *something*, the
practice of which was, to produce
tranquillity and complacence; which
was equally to defy distemper, ac-
cident, and revolution. This *some-
thing*, they recommend, without
bringing one solid argument in its
favour*. In *their* way, they reason
“ about it and about it,” till the
original idea, if, indeed, they ever
had such, is utterly annihilated. If,
therefore, their misconceptions and

* The fuller proof of this matter, together
with a free and fair enquiry into popular re-
ligions, and their regulating principles, is
preparing for the press by the Author of this
Apology, and will, it is hoped, clear from
rubbish, our much-obstructed idea on sacred
subjects.

blunders are thus manifest in *devotional* subjects, it may be expected that, they are not much more accurate or perspicuous in the manufacture of writings adapted simply to what is called the decencies and decorums of social life. I shall, however, as an instance, confine myself to expose the futility of what they call, with most atrocious affectation, *delicacy of sentiment*; two words to which, divested of their popular hypocritical meaning, imply more actual grossness and downright sensuality, than all that ever was written by Rochester, or any other licentious author. Rochester, indeed,

“ Shewed too much to raise desire.”

He made us delicate even from his
indelicacy;

indelicacy ; we behold his dirty, ill-disposed, figures, in all their nastiness and nudity ; the mind takes part with the body and recoils from enjoyment. But it is otherwise with writers, that are eternally shewing you the sentimental infamy of a personal trespass, to which nature (they own), with all her attractive force and vigour, inclines ; while they condemn us to flame and faggot, if we yield to her dictates. It is the fault of these men that they too often *remind* us of agreeable error, they minutely discover the temptation, and point to the most irresistible parts of it, yet charge us neither to touch nor to enjoy it. This is shameful ; but it is, notwithstanding, the basis of many literary reputations.

SE C-

SECTION III.

ON THE NATURAL DIGNITY OF THE
LITERARY CHARACTER, AND THE
REASONS WHICH HAVE BROUGHT
IT INTO CONTEMPT.

LET us now advert to *another* species of Hypocrisy, from which our Philosopher was totally exempt; to which, indeed, his temper was perfectly superior. Among the instances of generous independency in David Hume, must not be forgotten that manliness, which prevented him from wading through the
the

the prostituted puddle of fawning
 DEDICATION. To this magnanimi-
 ty—to this firmness it was owing,
 that, his feelings were never dis-
 graced, nor his spirit at any time
 weighed down by the burden of fa-
 vours, ignominiously begged, and
 ungraciously bestowed. Alexander,
 when he had won his world, had
 less reason to sing forth the Io Pean
 of triumph, than had our author to
 gratulate himself on the satisfaction
 of “never having preferred a re-
 quest to one great man, or ever of
 having made advances to any of
 them.” To confess the truth, he
 wrote, generally, upon subjects of
 which the modern nobility are, for
 the most part, so contemptibly ig-
 norant,

norant, that to have inscribed performances so scientific to such patrons, would involve the Philosopher in a similar error of judgment. Indeed, nothing is more offensive to men of true taste, and right feeling, than the *condescension* of persons of genius, to persons of rank, merely as such. This it is, more than any thing else, that hath helped to degrade the literary character; which, as it implies a superior vigour of intellect, and a more enlarged capacity, possesses, naturally, an unrivalled dignity. According to all the systems of all the sects, it is allowed that the *human understanding* is the greatest, as it is the most boasted, distinction of *human beings*;

consequently, one of these beings must rise higher than another in the scale of rationality, only by so much, as the distinguishing part of him is elevated above that of others : So, likewise, a shallow, illiterate, and vacant creature, must sink in the scale, by the same equitable proportion. Now, it is easy to prove, that, what are called the Great (who are but too commonly the least of all God's little atoms), must, according to the very nature of things, be amongst the *worst* judges of literary merit, and therefore, speaking truly, its most improper patrons. Men, born to titles and to fortunes which descend without effort, or exertion of any talent whatever, imagine the cultivation of
the

the mind totally adventitious : nor does the man of fashion admit it into the catalogue of his accomplishments. Even the harlequin Lord Chesterfield—that successful finatterer—allows only such a share of philosophy, as belongs to the philosophy of the passions ; which is nothing more in his idea, than guarding *yourself* while you make a fine, dextrous, and successful push at the passions of *another*. Giddiness, glitter, the indolence of plenty, and above all, its impudence, all contribute to render persons of rank, frivolous, voluble, superficial ; the illustrious exceptions of a Bacon, a Bolingbroke, a Shaftesbury, a Lyttelton, a Prussia, a Clarendon, have
nothing

nothing to do with a rule so deplorably general.

This being the case, can any thing be so preposterous, as to inscribe to the mere tinsel of titles, the labours of learning, or the reflections of accurate and abstruse Philosophy? Yet hath this been, for many ages, the practice. Whence hath it happened? The question cannot be answered without affecting us.

Fortune seems to have neglected those, whom Nature hath most favoured; and *men of genius*, I suppose, think it but fair, to supply the defect by soliciting *men of money*. This solicitation, however, subjects them to all that rudeness and disdain, which
those

those who have only a handful of authority, bestow upon their flatterers. The flatterers are, in turn, well served; they set out upon a wrong principle—The intercourse is altogether ill managed. Dedications, being another source of our *national Hypocrisy*, deserve a more correct investigation. It has been just observed, that they are fundamentally false.

A dedication admits of two distinct definitions, of which, one belongs to the Patron, and one to the Author. The Patron not only receives every untruth that can be expressed in the pride of Panegyric, as his due, but believes, at the same time,

time, that he receives it from an unprovided being, who is to exist for a certain space of time upon the success of his encomium. Something therefore is usually sent to keep— (for I would adopt the great man's language)— “the poor devil of an Author from starving:” The Author's definition, is, on the other hand, so servile, as to deduct from every sentiment of pity, and make us confess the justice of his disgrace. —He is contented to lavish praises, of which the best man on earth, might blush to be the objects, and he expects a golden reward, proportionate to the violent colourings of the varnish, and to the fainter, or

E. fuller

fuller blaze of the "lye courteous*". Which conduct shall we
most

* I have collected a few of these shameful Panegyrics, and thrown them into a note, by way of illustration.

Speaking of a man and woman whom the Poet never saw, he hath these expressions :

EXAMPLE I.

"I could not answer it to the world, nor to my conscience, if I gave not your Lordship my testimony of your being the *best husband now living*. You, my Lord, though it is not my happiness *to know you*, may stand aside with the small remainders of the English Nobility, truly such, &c."

Dryden.

EXAMPLE II.

"I assure your grace this Dedication is the result of a profound acknowledgment,
an

most reprobate? They are equally contemptible. The traffic should be

an artless inclination, proudly glad, and grateful: and if ever the influence of your Grace's *more* shining qualities should persuade me to attempt a *Tragedy*, I shall then borrow all the ornamental virtues from your greatness of *Birth*, sweetness of *Temper* flowing from the fixed and native principles of *Courage* and *Honour*, beauties, that I reserve for a further opportunity of expressing my zeal and gratitude."

Colley Cibber.

EXAMPLE III.

"The protection of the most distinguished, produces a kind of *inspiration* much superior to that which the *heathenish* Poets pretended to derive from their fictitious *Apollo*: My ambition is to address one of my *weak* performances to your Lordship, who are

E 2

justly

be regulated more consistently. If
men of genius must needs address
their

justly allowed by *universal consent*, to be the
best judge of all kinds of writing. I was,
indeed, at first deterred from my design, by
a thought, that it might be accounted un-
pardonable rudeness to obtrude a *trifle* of this
nature to a person, whose *sublime wisdom*
moderates the council, which, at this critical
juncture, over-rules the *fate of all Europe*."

Mrs. Centlivre.

EXAMPLE IV.

" I shall not grow tedious, by entering
into the usual style of Dedications : for my
pen cannot accompany my heart, when I
speak of your Grace ; and I am now writ-
ing to the *only person, living* to whom such
a Panegyric would be displeasing."

Henry Fielding.

EXAMPLE

their works to men of rank, let them assert a more noble equality. If they

EXAMPLE V.

“ You did not think it, Madam, beneath you to be officially good, even from the *extremest height* to discover the *lowest creature*. To have your Grace’s favour, is, in a word, to have the applause of the whole court, who are its noblest ornament; *magnificent, and eternal praise*: something there is in your mein, so much *above* what we call *charming*, that to me, it seems *adorable*, and your presence almost *divine*. You possess a *fulness of perfection*; to hear you speak is, methinks, to hear our *tutelar angels*: but to behold you too, is to make prophets quite forget their *heaven*, and bind the Poets with *eternal rapture*. Your Grace is the most beautiful idea of *love and glory*, and to that *divine* composition, have the noblest and best natured wit in the *world*.”

Nat. Lee.

they draw the portraits of any person remarkable for any thing,
let

EXAMPLE VI.

“ Nature and fortune were certainly in league when your Grace were born ; and as the first took care to give you beauty enough to enslave the hearts of *all the world*, so the other resolved to do its merit justice, that none but a monarch, fit to rule the world, should ever possess it, and in it, he had an empire.”

Thomas Otway.

I have not ascertained the property of any of these high-flown, nonsensical, passages, as belonging to any particular person, because, they are all so much in the same style, that they may, with equal propriety, be inscribed to all the Patrons in the world. It may, however, be well enough to take notice,

let not a writer think, he is
more honoured, than he honours;
if

tice, that the shallowest understanding in nature might have penetration enough to see the absurdity of each; most of them, being, in effect, rather satires than compliment. Dryden calls a man he never beheld, one of the *best husbands living*: Cibber hath the *artless inclination* to be *proudly glad and grateful* about nothing at all. Mrs. Centlivre hath the ambition to desire a nobleman of the *sublimest wisdom*, who rules the fate *of all Europe*, will, at a critical juncture, receive favourably, what she knows to be a *weak* performance. Fielding, under a pretence of avoiding the usual style of dedication, falls, in the very next sentence, into the grossest degree of the very fault, which, he reprobates: Poor Lee, who hath, indeed, his bill of lunacy to plead, calls himself the *lowest creature*, in comparison of a

if he emblazons a name, which was
before, glimmering in obscurity, the
obligha-

lady, who was *more than charming*, seeming-
ly *adorable*, and very near *divine*: while
Otway found out in his Patron the Dutches
of Portsmouth, that, her having been a pro-
stitute to a king, by whom she had a bastard,
was an illustrious transaction which no Poet
of any spirit, ought to pass, unsung.

But in justice to *some* English writers, I
~~must~~ not let this point go off thus ignomini-
ously, without producing, for the sake of
contrast, a deserving imitation, something on
the opposite side where even a Dedication
appears amiable. An address to the Count-
ess of Albemarle, from the polite Sir Rich-
ard Steele, opens in the following elegant
and consistent manner.

“ MADAM,

obligation is, to all intents, and purposes, on the side of the Patron;
who,

“MADAM,

Among the many novelties with which your Ladyship, a stranger in our nation, is daily entertained, you have not yet been made acquainted with the poetical English liberty, the *right of Dedication*; which entitles us to a *privilege*, of celebrating whatever, for its native excellence, is the *just* object of praise; and is an ancient *charter*, by which the Muses have always a free access to the habitation of the Graces”

In this passage, we have at once etiquette and dignity.—Let it be compared with the trash which preceded. One would indeed be apt to think the writers of that work, meant to burlesque the thing. The former examples look like so many *mock* Dedications. *Professedly* of this kind, the following is a specimen, and the only one I recollect in our language.

“DEDI-

who, but for such imputed excellence, would have passed unobserved through

“ DEDICATION.

To the Right Hon. worthy, and beautiful,
The Lady —*
Viscountess of —* Lady of the —*
And one of her Majesty's
— *—*

MADAM,

I most humbly beg permission to throw this trifle at your Ladyship's feet: and deeply conscious as I am of its unworthiness—of its inaccuracy, and of its incapacity to stand before so bright and penetrating an eye as your Ladyship's—I should not presume even to hope pardon for my temerity, were I not consoled by reflecting, that your taste, (infinite as it is,) meets a powerful competitor, in the immensity of your good-nature.

But

through life: if he faithfully displays a character already much celebrated,

But I have long wished an opportunity to approach so sacred and distinguished a character; and I now come forwards on my knee, with the profoundest humility of those creatures, which form a part of my present subject. As your illustrious birth defies the ambition of mere human words on the one hand, so your unparalleled virtues annihilate the force of terrestrial compliments on the other: I shall therefore on those heads observe a religious silence. Yet so far I must implore liberty of doing violence to your delicacy, as to remark that you are at once the pattern, and paragon of the age—that your beauty, wit, graces, and taste, are the envy of one sex, as your judgment and genius are the astonishment and motives of despair in the other. People of fashion in other ages, have undoubtedly possessed some

lebrated, he is still a benefactor to that character, if it were only for jogging the elbow of the public, which, but for such occasional mementos

admirable qualities. One woman may perhaps have been almost as handsome; a second may have been almost as agreeable; a third may have possibly possessed equal sensibility; and a fourth may have been nearly as liberal. But the grand consolidation, and concentration—the universal assemblage of bewitching accomplishments, each collected together, ray by ray, and blazing to a point, like a July sun, was reserved for that curiosity of providence the amiable Lady * * * * *

I humbly implore forgiveness for this intrusion, which I will only lengthen by beseeching your grace—I mean your Ladyship—

mentos would soon forget the best
and brightest man in the world.

Seriously, were literary persons to act upon some such principle as this, and shew their Patrons, that the dealing, was, in point both of praise and profit, entirely on ship—though a Dutcheſs you ought to be—will permit me to assure you

How ſincerely I am,

And

Eternally will be,

Your Ladyſhip's

Moſt obliged,

Moſt obedient,

Obſequious,

Devoted ſlave,

And very zealous ſervant,

——* *—*—*

Liberal Opinions, Vol. I.

the

the square, it would check much of that assurance which is now indulged, on the supposition, that writers are to offer incense at the shrine of greatness ; or,—in words more worthy so groveling a subject, to making the faggot blaze to gratify folly, and then to be paid for burning the fingers, as the pittance is dispensed by a task-master. Of much more service, indeed, would it be to genius, science, and general learning, if their votaries were more inclined to cherish a spirit of intellectual independency—if, instead of cringing to a courtier, or running, from the most sordid motives, into panegerical hyperbole, they were to assert
their

their dignity ; and shew the superior
* lustre of talents to the dullness of
titles,

* Of this intellectual superiority, we have the corroborating evidence of the INCOMPARABLE VOLTAIRE, in the following sentiments, taken from his " Letters concerning the English Nation."

" The circumstance which mostly encourages the arts in England, is the great veneration which is paid them. The picture of the Prime Minister hangs over the chimney of his own closet, but I have seen that of Mr. Pope in twenty noblemen's houses. Sir Isaac Newton was revered in his life-time, and had a due respect paid to him after his death ; the greatest men in the nation disputing who should have the honour of holding up his pall. Go into Westminster Abbey, and you will find, that what raises the admiration of the spectator is not the
Mausoleums

titles, I say, if a spirit of this kind were aroused, it would soon restore to men of genius, the original rights of literature, at the same time that it would effectually crush that daring insolence, which is now common among a set of people, who pique themselves upon advantages which,

Mausoleums of the English kings, but the monuments, which the gratitude of the nation has erected to perpetuate the memory of those illustrious men who contributed to its glory. We view their statues in that Abbey in the same manner, as those of Sophocles, Plato, and other immortal personages, were viewed in Athens ; and I am persuaded, that the bare sight of those glorious monuments has fired more than one breast, and been the occasion of their becoming great men."

Voltaire...

were

were the proper levelling power maintained, would, of itself, by no means entitle them to equal honours.

Instead of this spirited conduct, however, we have the misfortune to perceive a style of baseness and adulation, creep through most of the epistles dedicatory for the space of several centuries; by which means flattery and fulsomeness is associated with the very idea of those addresses, and the literary character is held, by the dullest of the species, in utter contempt.

What hath, undoubtedly, contributed to bring about so disgrace-

F ful

ful a circumstance, is a custom which prevails amongst authors, of swelling the ignorant vanity of Patrons, by submitting to them a performance prior to its entry into the public world : this mode, might, indeed, be reasonable enough, were it only designed as a compliment to the taste of the Patron, which the Authors may be supposed anxious to gratify, before the matter becomes, as it were, public property ; but when it is done with a view of begging permission to say civil things of the Patron and his family, it degenerates into a meanness which justly merits the neglect that commonly attends it.

Ask

Ask permission ! for what ? For distinguishing a man ? For circulating the knowledge of his good qualities beyond the narrow circle of, very likely, a frivolous set of companions ! Require *leave* to do this ! — Was there ever heard such an inconsistency ? — The point is misconceived. Be it again remarked, that, in true science, there is a greatness which can seldom *receive*, though it may often, *confer* obligations. Genius may more properly be said to patronize, than be patronized.

If a production is fit for the eye of men of taste, it ought to be acceptable to men of rank ; who are

ready enough to be thought in possession of a fine taste themselves, and very frequently, no doubt, pay liberally, for their dedications, solely upon that principle.

If, on the other hand, a performance is crude, trifling, ill-written, and, notwithstanding such defects, is, without the consent of the Patron, adorned with a name which it disgraces, such patron ought publicly to renounce his protection, and treat the pretender, as every pretender of whatever profession deserves to be treated; still, however, with this salvo, that if the production could have done any service to literature, or promoted, but in a small

small degree, the cause of science, he would have been the first man to acknowledge *his obligations*, for having been thought a fit patron to assist that cause, and strengthen those services.—While the present scandalous concessions remain, the sneer will inevitably be thrown upon such abominable prostration. I have been somewhat copious on this subject, because it has never, to my recollection, been placed in a proper light.

Perhaps, this doctrine of dedications, may be little relished by those who are daily pampered into conceit by daily panegyric, but it is a justice which every man of letters

owes to a character, founded on qualities, which ought to be a better passport to honorary distinctions, than any that can be conferred by royal grant, or by the pride of ancestry.

On such qualities was founded the reputation of David Hume, so that upon *this* occasion, at least, his example may be held up to persons engaged in literary pursuits, as a proper standard.

SECTION IV.

OF HUME'S PRINCIPLES, AND HIS
MOTIVE FOR MAKING THEM PUB-
LIC, WITH SOME REMARKS ON HIS
CONDUCT IN HIS LAST MOMENTS.

BUT to go on with the moral character of David Hume. Whoever places the writings of this Philosopher beside those of many Christian authors who have been much celebrated for them, will be able to judge without prejudice. It is impossible for the sentiments of the elegant Tillotson, or the orthodox Addison, to be more the champions of every part of

conduct, which tends to the welfare of the social world, than those sentiments which are to be collected from Hume—Nay, the most rational spirit of morality, the most likely of all others in the world, to affect this, breathes ardently through all his philosophy : elegance of taste, chastity of sentiment, delicacy of passion, decency of manners, love of truth, command of passion, cultivation of friendship, and the good order, and political prosperity of the state, are every where recommended. Very few of our eminent writers on the opposite side of the question can say as much. But, with respect to Mr. Hume, every effort

effort of his pen stands in testimony of it.

These observations cannot, nevertheless, be called sceptical. I do not, nor shall I presume to say, how far Hume's philosophy was right or erroneous in its *principle*. Sufficient for my purpose, if I can convince any reader (that might hesitate before) of his *consistency with himself*: a point, which, is of the utmost consequence to the cause of every system, be its purport, and its objects what they may.

The science pursued with such vigorous curiosity by Hume was, to use his own expressions, "to know

know the different operations of the mind, to separate them from each other, to class them under their proper heads, and to correct all that seeming disorder, in which they lie involved, when made the object of reflection and enquiry !”

It hath, generally, been thought that, our author carried this mental geography, as he calls it, too far into the realms of scepticism, and into the abstruse, bewildering deserts of uncheerful metaphysics. Yet, however ardent he was in speculations of this abstract and difficult nature, no one will deny, that he drew the form of virtue, upon all occasions, as the most lovely and
estimable

estimable of all objects. He firmly believed, that, in some very important respects, truth was overwhelmed in error and superstition; he was, therefore, sufficiently enterprising to try, if, by the aids of application, care, art, and discriminating accuracy, he could not "unite the boundaries of the different species of philosophy, by reconciling profound enquiry with clearness, and truth with novelty."

This, it is confessed, was the labour of a long, healthy, and contemplative life: he persisted in the pursuit, in defiance of all opposing fatigues, clamours, oppositions, neglects, oppressions. It could not
be

be the love of an established literary fame, that urged him to the prosecution of such researches, because he knew there was, in *his* species of philosophy, an abstractedness, as well as a supposed spirit of fallacy, which, could not, in the nature of things, and certain prevailing modes, become for many ages, either a popular, or a pleasing science. It was, to all intents and purposes, "*caviare* to the multitude." Nay, he was well persuaded of all this, not only by the odium which was cast upon his Treatise on Human Nature, which "fell dead born from the press," but also from the following passage, which shews how little hope he had of making the abstruse philosophy

losophy so generally relished as that
 which is more gay, elegant, and su-
 perficial. "Nothing can be more
 useful," says he, "than compositions
 of the easy style and manner, which
 draw not too much from life, re-
 quire no deep application, to be
 comprehended: and send back the
 student among mankind, full of
 noble sentiments and wise precepts,
 applicable to every exigence of hu-
 man life. By means of such com-
 positions, virtue becomes amiable,
 science agreeable, company instruc-
 tive, and refinement entertaining."

A Philosopher of Hume's close,
 and difficult reasoning, who was
 hardy enough to scrutinize subjects,
 imagined

imagined to puzzle more, as they are more investigated—a man, who had either patience or fortitude enough to cultivate metaphysical science, with a determined view of overturning, and eradicating, root and branch, prejudices which appeared *to him* at least, to merit an analysis which should prove their futility.—Such a man, could not expect the same eclat with the generality of mankind, as those who only played prettily on the surface of “a more easy and obvious philosophy.” Hume contented himself with less general gratifications. His own remarks very fully convince us what he felt, what he

4

expected,

expected, and what he enjoyed on this subject.

Speaking of the common distaste to which men have for speculations that require *thinking*, to comprehend them, he hath these sentiments in the first section of his Enquiry concerning Human Understanding.

“ But may we not hope, that philosophy, if cultivated with care, and encouraged by the attention of the public, may carry its researches still farther, and discover, at least in some degree, the secret springs and principles, by which the human mind is actuated in its operations? Astronomers had long contented them-

themselves with proving, from the phænomena, the true motions, order, and magnitude of the heavenly bodies : till a philosopher, at last, arose, who seems, from the happiest reasoning, to have also determined the laws and forces, by which the revolutions of the planets are governed and directed. The like has been performed with regard to other parts of nature. And there is no reason to despair of equal success in our enquiries concerning the mental powers and œconomy, if prosecuted with equal capacity and caution. It is probable, that one operation and principle of the mind depends on another ; which, again, may be resolved into one more general.

neral and universal: and how far these researches may possibly be carried, it will be difficult for us, before, or even after, a careful trial, exactly to determine. This is certain, that attempts of this kind are every day made even by those who philosophize the most negligently: and nothing can be more requisite than to enter upon the enterprize with thorough care and attention; that, if it lie within the compass of human understanding, it may at last be happily atchieved; if not, it may, however, be rejected with some confidence and security. This last conclusion, surely, is not desirable; nor ought it to be embraced too rashly. For how much must we

G diminish

diminish from the beauty and value of this species of philosophy, upon such a supposition? Moralists have hitherto been accustomed, when they considered the vast multitude and diversity of actions that excite our approbation or dislike, to search for some common principle, on which this variety of sentiments might depend. And though they have sometimes carried the matter too far, by their passion for some one general principle, it must, however, be confessed, that they are excusable in expecting to find some general principles, into which all the vices and virtues were justly to be resolved. The like has been the endeavour of critics, logicians, and even politicians :

cians : nor have their attempts been wholly unsuccessful ; though perhaps longer time, greater accuracy, and more ardent application, may bring these sciences still nearer their perfection. To throw up at once all pretensions of this kind may justly be deemed more rash, precipitate, and dogmatical, than even the boldest and most affirmative philosophy, which has ever attempted to impose its crude dictates and principles on mankind.

“ What though these reasonings concerning human nature seem abstract, and of difficult comprehension ? This affords no presumption of their falsehood. On the contrary,

it seems impossible, that what has hitherto escaped so many wise and profound philosophers can be very obvious and easy. And whatever pains these researches may cost us, we may think ourselves sufficiently rewarded, not only in point of profit but of pleasure, if, by that means, we can make any addition to our stock of knowledge, in subjects of such unspeakable importance."

But as we read Mr. Hume's life, written by his own hand, we shall have fresh opportunities to clear up any doubts that may remain of his sincerity. It seems pretty evident, that the little sketch, called MY OWN LIFE, was thought necessary, by Mr. Hume, to

be before hand with his philosophic antagonists, whom, he foresaw, would raise new outcries against him, upon the ideas they might indulge concerning those closing sensations which would attack him, within sight of the grave. To prevent little triumphs of this nature, I say, it is highly probable he chose the fairer method of being his *own* historian; and never was there a biographical tract drawn up by any man in the highest health, with more coolness, more conciseness, more impartiality.

He sat down to this extraordinary employment, and took up the pen, exactly at the time that hundreds—I might, I believe, extend

the number, to thousands,—were thinking he would begin the bitter groans of recantation. I certainly shall not take upon me to say how far this employment was proper, but the annals of the world cannot possibly produce any instance, whereby philosophy became so much *of a piece*. Whatever were the singularities of that philosophy, I once more insist upon it, it was a strong evidence that he disdained any of the popular hypocrisy now in vogue. He could not counterfeit the alterations which he did not feel risen in his mind; he was calm enough to give a candid account of his literary life, when he *knew* himself to be *incurable*.

After

After he had written it, he observes the same tranquil composure, in regard to the nearer approaches of death : Nay, such was his steadiness to the principles by which he was directed, that, in a codicil to his will, he desired the narrative of his life might be prefixed to the next edition of his works.

Having finished the account of his life, he had no farther opportunity to employ the pen, except from time to time, to send notes of information to the tender enquiries of his friends ; among the most beloved and distinguished of these, appears to have been Mr. Adam Smith, to whom, two or three days before

the stroke which carried him out of the world, he sent the following letter.

“ MY DEAREST FRIEND.

“ I am obliged to make use of my Nephew's hand in writing to you ; as I do not rise to day. * * * *

“ I go very fast to decline, and last night had a small fever, which I hoped, might put a quicker period to this tedious illness, but unluckily it has, in a great measure, gone off. I cannot submit to your coming over here on my account, as it is possible for me to see you so small a part of the day ; but Doctor Black can better inform

inform you concerning the degree of strength, which may, from time to time, remain with me. Adieu, &c."

This letter, may be brought, by every man who wishes well to Hume's Philosophy, as another instance of that invariable congruity, with which he maintained his character. *Heroism*, on these occasions approaches, for the most part, so near to *enthusiasm*, and *that* is so closely allied to absolute *frenzy*, that I shall not hazard such an appellation. I shall not say Hume died like a *hero*; I will content myself with saying, that he died like a *Philosopher*; perhaps, the
word

word * *Philosophy*, hath no very precise idea, generally affixed to it; because,

* The best and exactest definition of the *true*, as distinguishable from the *adulterate* on the one hand, and the *superficial*, Philosopher on the other, is defined by our Author, and discovers, in a very precise and affirmative manner, not only the thing itself, but his *own indefatigable character*.

“ The other species of philosophers consider man in the light of a reasonable rather than an active being, and endeavour to form his understanding more than cultivate his manners. They regard human nature as a subject of speculation; and with a narrow scrutiny examine it, in order to find those principles, which regulate our understanding, excite our sentiments, and make us approve or blame any particular object, action, or behaviour. They think it a reproach

because, it has been much confounded with the pragmatistical pretensions of

proach to all literature, that philosophy should not yet have fixed, beyond controversy, the foundation of morals, reasoning, and criticism; and should for ever talk of truth and falsehood, vice and virtue, beauty and deformity, without being able to determine the source of these distinctions. While they attempt this arduous task, they are deterred by no difficulties; but proceeding from particular instances to general principles, they still push on their inquiries to principles more general, and rest not satisfied till they arrive at those *original* principles, by which, in every science, all human curiosity must be bounded. Though their speculations seem abstract, and even unintelligible to common readers, they aim at the approbation of the learned and the wise; and think themselves sufficiently compensated

of the ignorant, the affected, and the superficial. There is a true, and a false philosopher. Mr. Hume is to be classed amongst the noblest of the *former* kind. He founded his system upon thought, science, argument, and reasonings, which, after many assiduous years, remained, in his mind, the same. Neither could the dissipation of youth allure him from his favourite studies, nor could the threats of dissolution itself frighten him from making preparations for a *new* edition of those works, which were to destroy, what pensated for the labours of their whole lives, if they can discover some hidden truths, which may contribute to the instruction of posterity."

he

he considered, as the prevailing systems of *superstition*.

In support of these observations, we may very properly call in the letter of his * physician, written the day after the decease of his patient.

Edinburgh, Monday, 26th August, 1776.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Yesterday about four o'clock afternoon, Mr. Hume expired. The near approach of his death became evident in the night between Thursday and Friday, when his disease became excessive, and soon weakened him so much, that he could no

* Dr. Black, of Edinburgh, universally known, beloved, and admired, as a friend, a physician, his chymical skill, and as a man.

longer

longer rise out of his bed. He continued to the last perfectly sensible, and free from much pain or feelings of distress. He never dropped the smallest expression of impatience ; but when he had occasion to speak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderness. I thought it improper to write to bring you over, especially as I heard that he had dictated a letter to you desiring you not to come. When he became very weak, it cost him an effort to speak, and he died in such a happy composure of mind, that nothing could exceed it."

Who would not wish, after reading this account, that *their* end, may be like *his* ?

S E C-

SECTION V.

PARALLEL BETWIXT HUME AND
LORD CHESTERFIELD, BOTH WITH
RESPECT TO ABILITIES, AND PRIN-
CIPLES.

WE have now surveyed our
object in the most trying moments
—We have seen him superior to all
ordinary terrors, and equal to all
occasions. It is taken for granted,
therefore, that as a philosopher, both
in precept and practice, it will be
allowed he was compleat, exact,

un-

unchangeable—that, whether wrong or right, he acted, immediately, from his own bosom conviction; a conviction grounded upon intense and abstract attention, and not taken up suddenly without respect either to cause or to consequence. Thus far, then, the point is cleared before me; but I cannot persuade myself to resign Mr. Hume till I have done ampler justice to his memory, [and to that social, and *honest* conduct which so much endears it.

I would draw a slight parallel betwixt this gentlemen, and another celebrated writer, who descended into the tomb a little before him. I would persuade the reader to compare

pare with me the system of David Hume, and that of the late Earl of Chesterfield. Not with a view of proposing the former to his imitation—for that point should always be settled by a man's own mind, after a great deal of premeditation upon the matter—but, as it may serve to shew, what hath, indeed, been a principal endeavour in these pages, that it is possible even for sceptics, to be more worthy members of society, more reverend to a first cause, whatever it may be, and more essentially the friend* of mankind, than the most illustrious

* Thus it is more and more obvious, that, the desire of literary fame, had not the great-

illustrious persons who have never ventured so far into the recesses of enquiry.

est share in prevailing with Mr. Hume to persist in a philosophy little understood, little liked, and much disrelished by the most powerful bodies in the world, to wit, the superstitious and hypocritical.

He was, therefore, not only a *consistent*, but an *honest* writer. After he had tried the experiment with his unfortunate Treatise and failed : after he had, in *vain*, cast anew the Enquiry concerning Human Nature : after he had published his Moral and Political Essays, with as little success : after the appearance of his Natural History of Religion had met with a very cool reception ; after all these mortifications, as he himself terms them, after all these variety of “ winds and seasons,” to which his writings had been exposed, with only those little gales of fugitive good fortune, to console him ; the railing of Doctor Warburton, and the illiberality

enquiry. Lord Chesterfield was a character more distinguished for the
brilliancy

rality of Bishop Hurd; such "was the force of his natural temper," such his "unsurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy" that, we find, by his dying confession, "these disappointments made little or no impression on him." "I was ever more disposed," says he, "to see the favourable than unfavourable side of things; a turn of mind, which it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year."

From these several circumstances, nothing can be plainer, than that, he was a serious enquirer into the extent of the human understanding: that he submitted patiently to every impediment that arose in the progress of so arduous and unpopular a contemplation: that he was neither attracted by fame,

brilliancy of his wit, than the solidier powers of his understanding.—In
points

nor deterred by censure. If he hath too fully indulged his passion, he did not err from any desire to *deceive*, because he certainly hoped to extricate truth from obscurity, and absurdity. If he was too adventurous he had the singular merit of not expecting either reputation or fortune for his mistakes. In one sentence, to concenter the whole force of his Apology, by clearing him of the most universal crime of all ages—*He was no Hypocrite.*

Violent verbal asseverations, and religious tenacity of opinion are exceedingly suspicious to the judicious, though they captivate and enthrall the vulgar and simple. I, must once more advert to a horrid contradiction

points of philosophy, he was exceedingly superficial, in politics he did

dition of the zealots—the little correspondence, and, indeed, generally speaking, the constant quarrelling there is betwixt their precept, and practice! Well might Hume observe, that, if we examine the lives of these men, we should scarcely think that they reposed the smallest confidence in their pious protestations. What! cannot the delightful belief of an ever-protecting real Presence,—cannot the charming hopes of Omnipotent favour, nor the merits of a Saviour, nor the expectations of a blessed Immortality, infuse into these sluggish religionists, an emulative spirit to exceed the goodness, and common conduct of men, like David Hume, who believed all these fair prospects, to be “a riddle, an ænigma, an inexplicable mystery.”

did not want sagacity or experience. Assisted, however, very much, by the splendours of his title—for a little spark will make a large lustre in a Lord—he sustained his character with singular eclat, and

Shall the very sages of our church, the examples and representatives of a Redeemer, be covetous, vain, dissolute, voluptuous, fraudulent, abandoned? while those, who, professedly, sit loose to the letter of the law, are, by the settled force of mere philosophy, temperate, moderate, sober? What pretensions can men have to credit who *believe themselves*? I still dispute not the propriety of the Christian Religion, but I must be candid enough to confess, I lay no great stress upon the manner of some of its *followers*, — and yet they have modesty enough to be very angry if any one questions their sincerest pretensions.

passed

passed in the world (which is very easily dazzled) as a compound of elegance, humour, *morality*, gaiety, and patronage.—These qualities, in a certain degree, we allow him to have possessed, except one: it certainly is not now necessary to observe that it is the word *morality* which must be scratched out of this list. For many years, however, Lord Chesterfield's *morals* were unsuspected; at length, too superficial to be consistent, or, perhaps, weary of deceiving the world into notions of his plain-dealing, he condescended, in the eve of life, to shew mankind what a bubble he had made of it; how long, and how successfully he had sported up-

on its weakneſſes—with how much eaſe he had played the elegant trifler, and by what modes and manœuvres, he had, with a facility which required no effort but a ſmooth face, and pliable features, led, in victorious chains, a thouſand fools to the altars either of ridicule, or debauchery, or deſtruction.

Such were the principles; ſuch is the ſyſtem of this *distinguished hypocrite*, by the adoption of whoſe precepts, it is utterly impoſſible either for youth or age, wit or wiſdom, to eſcape every thing that is execrable, contemptible, and deluſive. The atheiſtical Hume, as ſome have called him, was, in compariſon with
Cheſter-

Chesterfield, deserving of every epithet that could be formed in language to express virtue. In his life, writing, and at his death, he seems to have abhorred *disimulation*; and yet, his company “was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious, and literary;” nor had he “any reason to complain of the reception he met from *modest* women, in whose company he was particularly delighted.” He did not, nevertheless, profess a fondness for the society of *modest* women, because it was *safer* to have an affair of gallantry with such, than with a prostitute professed; or because the connection was more elevated and consistent with the amours
of

of a gentleman ; nor did he mix with the gay, and careless, with any latent design to take an advantage of the chearful hour, in order to make himself master of the secrets of the heart, imparted in its fullness—and consequently master of the person to whom that entrapped heart had the misfortune to belong. By no means.—Whatever objections may lie against the philosophy of Hume ; none of them are of this nature ; since his most abstract researches were in favor of a behaviour perfectly irreproachable.

Whoever is acquainted with Mr. Hume's writings, will bear witness, that he was a lover of decency, or-
I
der

der and decorum. Whoever knew the man, can attest, that, the following passages are no wise exaggerated.

“ *I am,*” says he, “or rather *was,* (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My
company

company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men any wise eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked by her baleful tooth: and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct: not but that

that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained."

To a character so amiable, so complacent, and so little tainted by that pedantry which always sticks to an *affected* philosopher, *who*, that hath any sense of agreeable qualities, will ever bring near him such a frivolous compound of whim, wickedness,

ness, cunning, and congee, as Lord Chesterfield; unless, indeed, he is brought forward by way of contrast. There appears likewise to me, to have been as wide a difference in the size of their abilities, as there was in the honesty of their principles: every page in those Letters, which have laid open his Lordship's hypocrisy, furnishes us with examples of his futility: it would be the drudgery of a day to detect a single light sentence in Hume. The Earl of Chesterfield's utmost stretch of penetration, amounts to little more than shrewdness, partly caught from the suggestions of a mind naturally suspicious, and partly from observations upon the weaknesses, and

and tender imperfections of men less capable to dissemble. This faculty, is at best, but a principal ingredient in the character of a *cunning* fellow, who, as it were, by imperceptible flight of hand, hath the art of appearing what he is not ; and of cheating you, with singular dexterity, even before your face.

But all the same, or popular etiquette that could possibly arise from such practices, Hume would have discarded with disdain. And, chiefly for two reasons : first, his genius had not a single grain of the *petit maitre* in it, which, by the way, was a considerable ingredient in Lord Chesterfield's ; and, secondly, he had too much dignity in his nature

ture, and too just a sense of the social compact between the individual, and the whole human race, to find any zest in gratifications, which emanated from, neither more, nor less, than flagrant treachery. Hence it appears obvious enough, that the Earl of Chesterfield's heart and head, were both unable to bear any sort of parallel, with the head and heart of David Hume. The one is the Author of a system which seems to have been pillaged from the Dancing-master, the Perfumer, and the Devil: the other pursues a philosophy, which, with all its exceptions, gives countenance neither to the follies of a coxcomb, nor the meanness, and mis-

mischief of a hypocrite—a wretch, which, in the course of these pages, hath been marked with singular reprobation; and above all other hypocrites, one that, in a kind of moral masquerade dress, perpetrates every baseness, and passes upon the world as a *mighty good Christian creature*.

SECTION VI.

OF PROPER CAUTIONS PRIOR TO THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF OUR RELIGI-
OUS CREDENDA.

WITH regard to the sceptical doubts which might start into the philosophical and reasoning mind of Mr. Hume, it is, I once more repeat, no part of my office, to defend or to censure them. As a variety of men have employed their talents on *one* side of an important subject, he hath taken the liberty, as a philosopher, to offer his opinions,

nions, on the *other* side: considered in the light of speculation, this is certainly fair; for who can circumscribe the efforts of a mind, bent for any length of time, on one favourite point?

The systems of either party, however, ought not to sway any man against the concurrence of his own reason; for, at that rate, one might be a Christian, a Deist, a Mahometan, or an Atheist, in obedience to the bidding of another: by which means our religion would have more colours than the camelion, and more alterations than Proteus. A sensible man, will never have servility enough for this. If he is yet

unestablished in his more serious tenets, he will see what can be said both *for* and *against*: of opposite principles, it is his business to fix upon those which appear the most congruous, and probable. * Reason and .

* Reason, indeed, I know not why, hath long been *unreasonably* denied a proper exercise of her power, in religious matters; while Faith is honoured with the privilege of insisting upon implicit obedience: yet the former, is called the noblest faculty of human nature, and the latter, should, certainly, only be allowed to follow in the train. The common argument, is little more than this,—You must believe, because you must believe. It is in vain to pretend any regard to probabilities; or to urge, against things sacred, the convictions of close reasoning—Reason is out of the question.—Is it not written in *the Book?*

and his feelings may generally be
 trusted upon the occasion. But
 let

Book ? The question, to be sure, must not be answered, but in one way. You *must* have Faith.—Now, it appears to me, that to call Reason our sovereign distinction, and yet reject its influence in points of eternal moment, while we affect to observe its dictates in matters indifferent, is just as rational as if we were to hold sacred and obligatory, those edicts of parliament which regulate our more public spectacles,—such as plays and puppet-shews ; while we snap our fingers at the state, and the personage who rules it, whenever a mandate is issued for the good order, and welfare of what is most important to the policy, power, or prosperity of nations. This method of *forcing* any particular faith upon a man, though it is taking an enemy by surprise, is, yet,

let him not be hasty, nor yet vibrate equipoise too long, between
fluctuat-

ridiculous enough in its nature, to admit an illustration, in the following passages from Henry Fielding's *Romance of Joseph Andrews*.

“ Mr. Barnabas was again sent for, and with much difficulty prevailed on to make another visit. As soon as he entered the room, he told Joseph, ‘ he was come to pray by him, and to prepare him for another world: In the first place therefore, he hoped he had repented of all his sins?’ Joseph answered, ‘ he hoped he had: but there was no one thing which he knew not whether he should call a sin; if it was, he feared he should die in the commission of it, and that was the regret of parting with a young woman, whom he loved as tenderly as he did his heart-strings!’ ”

fluctuating sentiments. *Fixing*, let him *fix*; unless, afterwards, upon,
very

strings?' Barnabas bad him be assured, that 'any repining at the Divine Will, was one of the greatest sins he could commit; that he ought to forget all carnal affections, and think of better things.' Joseph said, 'that neither in this world, nor the next, he could forget his Fanny, and that the thought, however grievous, of parting from her for ever, was not half so tormenting, as the fear of what she would suffer when she knew his misfortune.' Barnabas said, 'that such fears argued a diffidence and despondence very criminal; that he must divest himself of all human passion, and fix his heart above.' Joseph answered, 'that was what he desired to do, and should be obliged to him, if he would enable him to accomplish it.' Barnabas replied, 'that must be done by Grace.' Joseph besought him to discover

very cautious, and clear grounds,
 he hath weighty arguments to war-
 rant

how he might attain it.' Barnabas answered, 'by Prayer and Faith.' He then questioned him concerning his forgiveness of the Thieves. Joseph answered, 'he feared, that was more than he could do: for nothing would give him more pleasure than to hear they were taken.' 'That,' cries Barnabas, 'is for the sake of justice.' 'Yes,' said Joseph, 'but if I was to meet them again, I am afraid I should attack them, and kill them too, if I could.' 'Doubtless,' answered Barnabas, 'it is lawful to kill a thief: but can you say, you forgive them as a Christian ought?' Joseph desired to know what that forgiveness was. 'That is,' answered Barnabas, 'to forgive them as——as——it is to forgive them as——in short, it is to forgive them as a Christian.' Joseph replied, 'he forgave them as much as he could.'

rant an alteration. If his intellect is *sound* enough for science,—shallow-

could.’ ‘Well, well,’ said Barnabas, ‘that will do.’ ‘He then demanded of him, if he remembered any more sins unrepented of; and if he did, he desired him to make haste and repent of them as fast as he could: that they might repeat over a few prayers together.’ Joseph answered, ‘he could not recollect any great crimes he had been guilty of, and that those he had committed, he was sincerely sorry for.’ Barnabas said that was enough, and then proceeded to prayer with all the expedition he was master of: some company then waiting for him below in the parlour, where the ingredients for punch were all in readiness; but no one would squeeze the oranges till he came.”

I am afraid the arguments of Mr. Barnabas are, for the most part, full as cogent
as

lowness is perilous in philosophy, as well as learning,—he can receive no injury from having heard both the pro and con. The case of a Judge upon a cause, brings the matter home to the “business and

as those which impose a system upon us, without allowing us to consult the understanding. — Are they *afraid* we should refer to so sober an authority as Reason? Is it for their *interest* to make us the mere tools of credulity? Is it political to beat us, *vi, et armis*, into adoption of their favourite tenets? Such an assault upon vulgar, timid minds, may be very alarming; but, I confess, I could never be inclined, either to Diesm, Mahomatism, or Christianity by *compulsion*. The Philosopher, will, so far at least, be a free agent, and, like poor Joseph, believe *as well*, and *as much as he can*.

besom" more familiarly. A magistrate is not qualified to decide of any point before him, till witnesses on *both* sides are examined: to these, very often, for conscience sake, are added cross-examinations, to see if the story told any other way, hath the same consistence and congruity. The evidence once satisfactory to the senses of the judge, and all doubt removed by several facts, each agreeing with the other, and all resolving themselves into an harmonious whole, he proceeds, without farther debate or delay, to the final sentence, which, whether it dispenses life or death, is given with the same firmness, energy, and resolution.

Similar

Similar to this, should be the procedure of any person unestablished in his religious concerns. It is too important an article to take up on mere trust. A thinking man will not be a Deist, or a Christian, only because his father before him, and all the other branches of his family were one of those. He will look with an eye of penetration into the circumstances : he will see why, wherefore, and upon what considerations, this adopts Christianity, that Deism. He will compare one system to another ; examine their distinct parts, and correspondencies. — Trace out the points where they separate, where they blend : in what they are utterly different, and where-

in they are obviously, or apparently analogous.

When this sober task is diligently done, let reason assert her dignity, and having scrutinized liberally, let her liberally determine. To which ever side she inclines, let it be upon the result of her conviction, without paying any regard to passion, or prejudice, two mercenary counsellors, which, in the court of moral arbitration, are too apt to take bribes, and turn the issue of the cause, while they endeavour to blind the equity and discernment of the magistrate.

Above

Above all other *fatal things*, I warn you not to give implicit credit to *great authorities*, which, in religious cases, are never to have an undue influence. Let not the force, splendour, or power of a name, seduce, or awe you into a partial choice. Religion, like matrimony, should be, if possible, settling for life. Let neither Hume, or Addison, or Bacon, or Bolingbroke, Locke, or Tillotson, sway you by any thing, but the actual weight of arguments, which strike eventually and irresistibly upon the *rational faculty*.

These hints pursued, will, I cannot but believe, serve, in some degree,

gree, every hesitating person ; and, when carried into practice, I have faith enough in them to conjecture, they will enable every one who is pleased to lend them his attention, to act honestly, amiably, uprightly ; and to discharge his duty according to the truth that is in him, whether he be of one religion or another.

Of David Hume, or of his philosophy, I shall say no more ; but from a succinct view of the whole matter, I apprehend it may very fairly be concluded, in repetition of Mr. Smith's words, that, " though men will, no doubt, judge variously of his philosophical opinions, every one
 approving,

approving, or condemning them, according as they happen to coincide or disagree with his own, yet, concerning his character and conduct, there can scarce be a difference of opinion."

A N
A D D R E S S
T O
One of the People called CHRISTIANS.
By way of REPLY,
T O H I S
L E T T E R
T O
A D A M S M I T H, L. L. D.
O N T H E
L I F E, D E A T H, A N D P H I L O S O P H Y
O F H I S F R I E N D
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A N
A D D R E S S, &c.

S I R,

Y O U R very *Christian* epistle, wet from the Clarendon press, was brought to me by my bookseller, just as I was correcting a proof sheet of that Apology, from the first advertisement of which, in the newspapers, you seem to have caught the hint of your title: I mean so
K 2 much.

much of it as relates to the Life, Death, and Philosophy of David Hume, Esq.

Upon shewing *my* original title-page* to a learned acquaintance, he said he discovered therein a visible impropriety. An Apology for the Death for any man, he thought, unnecessary. Your letter convinces me, the blunder would not have amounted to an Iricism, had it been admitted agreeable to my first design;—since you have, I find, as many, and as powerful objections

* The original title-page, printed in the London Packet, run thus: An Apology for the Life, Death, and Philosophy of David Hume, &c.

to Mr. Hume's manner of dying, as to his manner of living. But your letter to Dr. Smith is too singular not to command as much of my attention, as can, at this late period of my time, when *THE APOLOGY* is just stepping abroad, be allowed.

Your epistle, Sir, is the first of those—though I confess it came out rather sooner than I expected—which I prognosticated would be levelled both at David Hume and Dr. Smith. It is certainly right that the people called Christians, should, with all decent earnestness, espouse the cause of that religion, upon whose sacred foundations their

faith is established. I blame you not, therefore—the more especially if you are of the holy order, which I take to be the case—for drawing your weapon in behalf of what appears to you, to be the only system that ought to be universally adopted. It is laudable: it is amiable: it is noble. But then it should have been done—a business so important—so delicate—should have been done, Sir, without spleen, without rancour, without uncharitableness.

Hath this been the case? — The rage of a hurried composition is now gratified, your zeal hath almost kindled the wheels in its journey to London, and you are, perhaps,—or

you will be, by the time this reaches you, in your—I will not call it—*easy* chair.—Pray—reverend Sir—you see I cannot help thinking I am addressing a clergyman, though without your precaution I should have known you were not writing with the pen of a B—— —.

Pray, reverend Sir, let your pamphlet lie upon the table, as you and I—with the pleasantry which I perceive is so dear to you—examine some of its paragraphs.

Your *style* is, as you say, “* free and easy” enough; but neither in

* Letter, p. 2.

that, nor in your sentiment, do you appear to have “in your composition any large proportion of that which our inimitable Shakespeare styles, * *the milk of human kindness*” And though it must be confessed, you now and then are, as you say, ready to praise, yet it is of that sort, as if

“Your spirit mock’d itself.”

or to apply another poetical expression, which seems not to be ill-suited—

“You *damn* with *faint praise*.”

The other part of this memorable couplet must, however, be paro-

* Letter, p. 4.

died,

died, to be apposite; for, your *leer* is by no means *civil*, and you *do* sneer yourself most horribly, even while you are teaching *others* to sneer——

Proceed we to the proof.

It is with a very considerable share of prudence, that you advise such readers as * find no satisfaction in your book, to “throw it into the fire.”—I confess, I was, in the progress of the perusal, more than once tempted to make a sacrifice of this nature; and I more than once, also, heartily regretted the † loss of my

* See advertisement to Letter, p. i.

† Ditto, p. ii.

shilling,

Shilling, and I shall, certainly, take care “* not to lose another in the same manner.” Not, Sir, because “† I am an enemy to human learning, or that I could not have made a hearty meal, upon a good, fair, and candid defence of Christianity, as yourself; but because, I cannot possibly consider, as candid or fair, or good, a pamphlet, which is written with an indecent degree of warmth, and with very little regard to liberality. What have you not, upon the present occasion, *drolled upon*?—You have chosen to write your letter to Dr. Smith in a *droll*

* Advertisement, p. ii.

† See Letter, p. 3.

way, upon the most serious of all human subjects, and yet you are very angry that our dying philosopher, should, in his last hours, “ * read Lucian—play at whist, and droll upon Charon and his boat.”

—I should not—I *shall* not, Sir,—oppose Mr. Hume’s philosophy, to the principles of Christianity—but I think it very hard that you should so entirely forget, the Christian temper, the Christian meekness, and the Christian charity, which so eminently distinguished its divine master.—Nay, you are deficient in the very liberality, which should mark every fair, and rational enquirer.—Is it liberal, Sir, to turn the ar-

* See Letter, p. 10.

rows of ridicule against a long life of—*good-nature, compassion, generosity, charity*; merely because his opinion happen to differ from yours?—Is that rectitude of conduct, which confessedly marked Mr. Hume, to be dwindled down to nothing, for the sake of supporting an argument on the opposite side of the question? Is it I say, Sir, to be shrunk into the idea of his being “* *good company*, and knew how to manage his *cards*?”—But almost every part of your letter to Dr. Smith allows sufficient scope for the severest censure. The witticism of turning Mr. Hume’s History of

* Letter, p. 11.

England into a noble effort of * *matter and motion*, is wretched : to pay you, however, a compliment, in kind, I must just express my notion, that, your pamphlet neither possesses such valuable *matter* ; nor do I think it will have, by any means, so noble a *motion* : it will, I trust, like one of Hume's treatises, *fall dead born from the press*, and be amongst the things which are no more remembered, although you have, boastingly, called it an † *alarum* bell to the admirers of Mr. Hume : yea, even though you insist upon it—with a zeal which relishes more of

* Letter, p. 3.

† Ditto, p. 24.

bigotry

bigotry than Christianity—* that it should be rung in their ears, till succeeded by the last trumpet.

The questions you address to Dr. Smith, are, most of them, exceedingly superficial; the first is perfectly ridiculous. “Why all this hurry and bustle, to satisfy the public, that our Philosopher lived and died perfectly composed and easy? Was there, say you, any suspicion in *Scotland*, that he might not, at times, be quite so composed and easy as he should have been?”

And would you really have a serious answer to so silly a question?

* Letter, p. 25.

Pray,

Pray, Sir, was there ever yet a being so uniformly tranquil, so perpetually serene, as to be always the same, and appear to his family, to his friends, and to his foes, without some little discomposure? If you speak in a *religious* sense: I desire to know, whether the firmest Christian—to pay you the compliment—Sir—whether *you*, have not, at times, had upon you those feelings which have run counter to the general tenor of a more collected conduct; and whether, now and then, you have not been, even in points of orthodoxy, less composed, and less easy than you could wish to have been? The best men upon earth, are, in proportion to their sensibility,

the

the most susceptible of these occasional disorders; nor can all the Religion, or Fortitude, or Philosophy in the whole world prevent it.

Your second interrogatory, and the third, which is directly connected with the second, are not more aptly proposed, nor deserve they a more sober answer than the first.

* “ Was there ever any *Book* written against Mr. Hume—which shook his system to pieces about his ears, and reduced it to a heap of ruins, the success and eclat of which might be supposed to have hurt his

* Letter, p. 25.

mind, and to have affected his health? “Was there any *Author*, whose *name*, his friends never dared to mention before him, and was not all strangers, that were introduced to him, against doing it; because he never failed, when by any accident it was done, to fly out into a transport of passion and swearing? or hath no book been written to impair the growth and increase of his philosophic reputation?”—In reply to these several points I shall wave all stricture upon the scurrility, and unchristian spirit which is mixed up with them, and only observe, that, no book *has* been written, that has impaired Hume’s philosophical reputation; a philosophic reputation,

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subsists only among philosophers; and they, to a man, hold Beattie's Book in contempt; which, is a philosophy calculated only for ladies, and fine gentlemen.

Your arguments, Sir, are not much happier than your questions; as your remarks are in general, poorer than both. I shall expose the futility of these, as their absurdity occurs to my mind, upon a re-examination of your Letter.

What you have called a * "summary of Mr. Hume's doctrines, metaphysical and moral," is either a *wilful* or an *ignorant*, misrepresentation

* Letter, p. 39.

tation of Hume's system, which never in any one part or passage, gave you first cause to say, its author, at any time * "sat down calmly and deliberately to obliterate from the hearts of the human species every trace of the knowledge of God and his dispensations." Much less did he endeavour to "extirpate all hope of enjoying God's grace and favour." On the contrary, I do again insist, that Mr. Hume's philosophical system, inculcated every thing praiseworthy †.

Secondly, Sir, you are upon a wrong ground in asserting that, to

* Letter, p. 16.

† See Apology, Sect. 3. p. 70. 71. 72.

want honesty, and to want understanding, and to want a leg, are equally the objects of *moral* disapprobation.

This cannot be any part of David Hume's doctrine, neither can bear critical examination. In fact, the most pitiable of all human objects is a dishonest reprobate, for nothing can so truly be compassionate as a man who hath not even *policy* enough to be *honest*, yet he is certainly an object of moral disapprobation; and tho' it may be very proper to pity him, it is equally proper that, for the sake of an example, and for the service of mankind, he should be punished. A criminal pleaded upon
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his trial, as an extenuation of his offence, that he was *predestined* to commit it : I am heartily sorry for that friend, said the judge, but by the same rule, I am predestined to order you to be hanged. Breaking a leg is assuredly a pitiable circumstance, but, in point of culpability, shall it be equally immoral with want of honesty ? Nor did I ever know before that, want of *understanding*, was to be imputed to a man, as criminal, though it may sometimes be attributed to his weakness, or want of application.— Again, can a *whole* leg be called a corporeal *virtue* ; or can a broken one be termed with any propriety, a corporeal *vice* ? Corporeal virtues,

must be personal virtues; such as charity, cleanliness, continence, &c. &c.

There is something so unaccountable in this sentence, Sir, that I should esteem myself very much obliged to you if you would intercede with your * learned friend, who drew up a comprehensive summary of Hume's doctrines, to refer me to that passage in our Philosopher's Works which treats of this matter.

I beg references also, by help of the same medium, to those parts of

* Postscript to Letter, p. 38.

Hume

Hume, which is, you say, * “de-
signed to prove the *soul's mortality*,” an
attempt which I cannot with the
closest attention perceive, was ever
made. Hints about his justification
of *self-murder*, † are, as some cri-
tics have already observed, “candour
itself requires, we should not attack
a work, which the Author himself
had abandoned, and in some measure
reprobated.”

By way of contrast to the beha-
viour of Mr. Hume, you lay before
us, for the choice of our adoption,
the behaviour of Hooker the Chris-
tian.—I am curious to know the

* Letter, p. 28.

† London Review.

reasons for proposing Hooker as a contrast to Hume.—Was there any thing in the conduct of their last moments which so materially distinguished them? Let us draw the curtain, and observe.

Immediately before the Author of the Ecclesiastical Polity expired, he spake thus :

“ I have lived to see, that this world is made up of perturbations ; and I have been long preparing to leave it, and gathering comfort for the dreadful hour of making my account with God, which I now apprehend to be near. And though I have, by his grace, loved him in my youth, and feared him in mine age,

age, and laboured to have a conscience void of offence, towards him, and towards all men, yet, if thou, Lord, shouldest be extreme to mark what I have done amiss, who can abide it? And therefore, where I have failed, Lord, shew mercy to me; for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness, through His merits, who died to purchase pardon for penitent sinners. And since I owe thee a death, Lord, let it not be terrible, and then take thine own time; I submit to it. Let not mine, O Lord, but thy will be done!—God hath heard my daily petitions; for I am at peace with all men, and he is at peace with me.

me. From such blessed assurance I feel that inward joy, which this world can neither give, nor take from me. My conscience beareth me this witness; and this witness makes the thoughts of death joyful. I could wish to live, to do the Church more service; but cannot hope it; for my days are past, as a shadow that returns not."

* When Hume's symptoms returned with violence upon him, he from that moment gave up all thoughts of recovery, and submitted with the utmost cheerfulness, and the most perfect resignation and

* Life, p. 42.

complacency : * he always talked of his approaching dissolution with great cheerfulness, but never affected to make any parade of his magnanimity. When even the conversation of his friends became oppressive and fatiguing, he was quite free from † anxiety, or impatience. Even the last stage of his disorder, when it even cost him an effort to speak, and when he had occasion to address the ‡ people about him, he always did it with affection and tenderness.—After all this he died “in such a happy composure of

* Dr. Smith's Letter, p. 51.

† Dr. Smith's Letter, p. 54.

‡ Dr. Smith's Letter, p. 58.

mind

mind, that nothing could exceed it."

I look in vain for a *distinct difference* between the last moments of Hume and Hooker, Sir. Did Hooker "labour to be at peace with all men?" So did Hume, who had "no enemies on which he wished to revenge himself." Did Hooker live to see, that, "† this world is made up of perturbations?" So did Hume, who—though the later period of his life was the most agreeable to him, and though he saw many symptoms of his literary

* Dr. Smith's Letter to Mr. Strahan, p. 48.

† Letter, p. 32.

repu-

reputation breaking out at last with additional lustre—considered that, “* a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities,” inasmuch that he declares, almost with his dying breath, that, “it would be difficult to be more detached from life” than he was at that crisis.

Point out to me then, I conjure you, Sir, the superiority in the manner of Hooker’s dying. I own I cannot, without some peculiar assistance, find it out. And, I trust, likewise, that such readers of my APOLOGY, as are neither, “† bi-

* Life, p. 31.

† Letter, p. 2

gots,

gots, enthusiasts, nor enemies to human learning," will be fully convinced that the influences of the philosophy which are the object of our present dispute, were in no degree * pestilential.

From what has been already urged, you will perceive, Sir, that I by no means think that your Letter to Dr. Adam Smith is † *ingenuously* written;

* Letter, p. 30.

† It were no difficult matter, to prove also that you have not written *ingeniously*; several gross blunders, which even hurry cannot excuse, occurring in different parts of your pamphlet. Thus, in Advertisement, p. 1. you "made your remarks, because you thought them true." What, Sir, "did you

written ; nor do I think the Doctor's
deceased friend, will very cordially
accept

you think them true *before* the thoughts were
made." P. 4. of Letter, you use the word
proportion for *portion*, by which mistake the
passage is truly ridiculous. P. 4. you say
you never knew what hatred was? No!
What, do not you hate vice, and the villain?
Good, meek, milky-minded man, the
friends of virtue and honesty are much
obliged to you for that truly! P. 10. you
talk facetiously of *dying* as insensibly and
foolishly as you can for the *life* of you: you
say you are a *South Britain*. Who would
not have thought you were just exported
from the banks of the Shannon? P. 14. is
the word *yourself* for the word *you*, and va-
rious other errors—not of the press, but,—
to adopt your own language—"these are
trifles ; my quarry lies not this way. I
fly

accept services, so maliciously offered, even † IF (as you cautiously observe) departed spirits *have* any knowledge of what is passing upon earth.

After all, Sir, how can you allow your pen such a licence—a licence, you would not dared to have indulged, had the philosopher been in the land of the living—as to say that his existence was passed ‡ without God in the world? Though his fly at nobler game. The atrocious cruelty of insisting that a writer diffused *Atheism*, who never *did* diffuse any such thing, is a subject that concerns every body.”

† Letter, p. 30.

‡ Letter, p. 32.

notions of a supreme Power might not perhaps directly tally with yours, how are you able to tell that such a power did not as highly approve his arguments as your own? Would you pronounce a sentence of damnation against the Indian for his worship to the sun—against the Mahometan for his homage to the Prophet—against the Chinese for his idolatry to a sculptured image—against the Persian for his prostration to a cloud? All these people have different ideas of a Deity from you.—None of these are Christians—Millions of them believe * nothing about the Son—Many of them are, moral, social,

* Letter, p. 31.

M

pious,

pious, humane, charitable — Shall they, nevertheless, not see life, but shall the wrath of God, so furiously denounced by St. John, abide on them?

I am shocked at such a system. Yet the case is parallel. Fie upon it, Sir. It is not the part of a Christian pastor to be extreme to mark even what is done amiss, nor is it characteristic either of a follower of Jesus, or of a servant of the eternal Father, to snatch from the hand of that father,

* ——— “ the ballance or the rod.”

Although, you have taken upon you to “ rejudge his justice, and

* Essay on Man.

be

be the God of God." All that part of your Letter, therefore, Sir, which would represent Mr. Hume as unworthy the mercy, or protection of a Providence, is arrogant, insolent, ignorant, and presumptuous.

But, to say the truth, and do you full justice, you seem, Sir, to profess a notable talent for misrepresenting the sentiments of those whom you are pleased to censure. I am sorry to find you do not think Dr. Smith's *good meaning* will succeed; because, — without the least mixture of your beloved irony—I really think his design was perfectly laudable.

able. I see nothing wrong in his persuading us to follow the example of David Hume, because, I perceive, not a syllable that proposes Atheism as a cordial for low spirits, and the proper antidote against the fear of death. If *you* perceive such sentiments, I again repeat, that, it becomes you, Sir, as a fair-dealing Christian, who ought to do justice betwixt man and man, to be more particular in your references, and not to be

“ laughing wild
In *merry* madness.”

Your simile of John the Painter is very elevated, indeed, and soars superior to all reply : I am not offended,

fended, and accept, very good humouredly, your declaration of * meaning no harm. The misfortune is, that I am afraid you will do no good. Your pamphlet, like what *you* take to be Mr. Hume's definition of the soul — a thing by the bye which he never mentions — † is not one, but many things, and being a jumble of many things together, is, ultimately, nothing at all. You more than once, ‡ subvert your own hypothesis, and prove, by your ungracious manner of arguing, that by such argument nothing can be proved.

* Letter, p. 5.

† Letter, p. 39.

‡ Letter, p. 42.

These

These, Sir, among many other reasons, induce me not to speak quite so * handsomely of you as I could wish ; and these are also my motives for refusing to introduce you to my kinsfolk, and acquaintance.

Upon the whole, Sir, after accurately examining your Letter to Dr. Smith, and carefully re-considering the whole subject of the preceding APOLOGY in consequence of it, I am able to conclude with an application of your *own closing expressions*, and of my motto, namely, that, “†on reviewing what I have written,

* Advertisement to Letter, p. 2.

† See Advertisement, p. 4.

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I really cannot see there is any occasion for me to alter, or to add another sentence."

" For modes of faith, let graceless zealots fight :
His can't be wrong, whose *life* is in the right."

Consequently, David Hume's system, upon account of the rectitude of his life, cannot be wrong.

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

One of the People who venerate SINCERITY.

F I N I S.

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